

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

December 28, 1981

POLAND: Another Test for the Regime

The regime's attempt to impose order will be tested today as most of the work force ends its holiday. Strict disciplinary measures will not be sufficient to reclude widespread passive resistance. The Church may have secured the release of some people detained by the government. The status of Soviet and other Warsaw Pact military forces remains substantially unchanged, with Soviet forces in Poland probably still on alert. [REDACTED]

The reduced holiday work schedule likely has been an important factor in defusing potential strikes. The government probably hopes that its strong show of force and its success at breaking strikes have convinced workers that new resistance would be futile. The regime also may believe that the imposition of strict discipline on factories and mines that have been militarized will also be a deterrent. [REDACTED]

To intimidate would-be strikers, the military government yesterday announced that a number of Solidarity activists have been given prison sentences--ranging from six months to three and a half years--for trying to organize strikes since the imposition of martial law. [REDACTED]

Little hard evidence is available to gauge the mood of workers, but discontent is likely to be most apparent in the coal mines of Silesia and along the Baltic coast, although some workers in Gdansk will not return for another week. Some workers probably will try to organize new sit-in strikes, but the predominant response may be widespread passive resistance in the form of work slow-downs. [REDACTED]

The regime may be losing patience with strikers at the Piast coal mine in Silesia, apparently the only major strike still under way. TASS quoted a member of Warsaw's martial law council as stating that the "responsibility for this senseless action will be borne by those who resorted to violence, who terrorized their workmates." This could signal a toughening of tactics to end the strike. The government earlier had broadcast appeals of wives and mothers to induce striking miners to end their holdout. [REDACTED]

Approved for Release
Date AUG 1993

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A government announcement yesterday that meat rations will be smaller next month for all except manual laborers reflects a drop in procurements from private farmers and the inadequacy of recent deliveries from other Communist countries. Polish television on Sunday blamed the US suspension of grain deliveries for reduced poultry production.

If deliveries from private farmers continue at low levels, the regime will come under strong pressure to institute a system of compulsory deliveries. The government would be reluctant to establish such a system, however, because it would embitter relations with farmers for years and would be interpreted as a sign that the regime is not really interested in reform.

Church Activities

Papal envoy Poggi, back in Rome yesterday, said publicly that he still has "hopes for a dialogue between the authorities and the social forces" of Poland. The French press agency, meanwhile, reports that its Vatican sources claim the Church has secured the release of 800 people detained by the Polish Government. The report adds that Polish churchmen in Rome believe that the regime has arrested 8,000 to 10,000 people--fewer than is being reported in many Western media but more than the 5,000 admitted by Warsaw.

Soviet Military Activity

Soviet and non-Soviet Warsaw Pact forces appear to be engaged in routine training activities.

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Moscow's View

Soviet media coverage yesterday focused heavily on alleged US efforts to "internationalize" the Polish problem. A Soviet commentator charged that the US was trying to create a crisis to pursue its own "egotistic" goals--to force the Western Allies into line, to wreck the Geneva INF talks, and to provide cover for an "adventure" in Libya, Nicaragua, or Iran.

The thrust of the commentary suggests a major effort by the USSR to isolate the US from its Allies on this issue. Moscow's interest in avoiding any coordinated Western sanctions and its long-term commitment to driving a wedge between the US and its Allies ensure that the effort will continue.